

REMARKS

Pending Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,910,283 issued to Hobson in view of Japanese reference 07-214,652 issue to Mori.

The Mori reference discloses a blow mold trimming apparatus which includes multiple vacuum vents arranged in a linear manner along the length of the cavity defining a portion of the product. The vacuum vents are located in a line found between a pair of cutting blades in each illustrated embodiment of the Mori reference. Accordingly, the portions of the product which lie outside of the area defined by the line of vents between the cutting blades are not held by a vacuum against the interior of the mold cavity during the trimming process. For this reason, the vacuum assist system of Mori would provide a less structurally supportive hold on portions of the blow molded product during the trimming process than would be desirable for some blow molded products. In the absence of sufficient structural support (as is provided by each of the applicant's claimed methods), certain type of blow molded products (particularly, thin-walled tubular products) would be more vulnerable to crushing during the trimming process than would be desirable. This is because cutting processes subject the material to be cut to compression forces which, under some conditions, can damage improperly supported blow molded products.

Moreover, it is believed that the combination of the Mori and Hobson references by a skilled artisan would yield merely a trimming method in which the linearly arranged vacuum vents of Mori are provide along the length of a portion of the mold cavity of Hobson. This is because there is no teaching or suggestion that the vent holes be adjacent to both sides of the cutter blade as in Claim 1, arranged around the periphery of the mold cavity adjacent to the cutter blade as in Claim 4, or arranged around the periphery of the cavity adjacent to both sides of a cutter blade as in Claim 5. For these reasons, it is also believed that the methods of amended Claim 1 as well as new Claims 4 and Claim 5 are patentably distinguishable over the

combination of Mori and Hobson.

Turning more specifically to the language of the listed Claims, amended Claim 1 now calls for a vacuum supplied by vents which are located adjacent to both sides of the cutter blade. This configuration provides for additional support to the blow molded product in order to reduce the likelihood that the compression forces generated during trimming process might damage the product. Without vents located on both sides of the blade, one risk during trimming is that the product becomes slightly cocked relative to the blade during the trimming process, which can result in uneven cutting or jamming of the part in the mold cavity. In certain situations, providing suction vents on just one side of the blade may even aggravate, rather than alleviate, problematic cocking of the article during trimming.

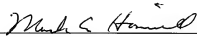
New Claim 4 is directed to a method in which the trimming is performed on a blow molded product which is held by vacuum vents arranged around the periphery of the mold cavity adjacent to the cutter. The Mori reference does not show the use of vacuum vents which are peripherally arranged around the interior of the mold cavity adjacent to a cutting blade. The additional product support offered by the arrangement of vacuum vents of the method of Claim 4 are particularly useful where the blow molded product has a tubular configuration since such structures can have a greater tendency to collapse upon contact with a cutting blade, if not held firmly enough by properly located vacuum vents adjacent to the blade.

The method of new Claim 5 includes the advantages of both amended Claim 1 and new Claim 4, that is, it provides a plurality of peripherally located vacuum vents within the cavity adjacent to both sides of the cutter blade. Such a configuration provides maximum support to the product to further reduce the risk of compression damage during the trimming process.

For the reasons set forth above, it is believed that each of the methods of Claims 1-5 are patentably distinguishable over the methods disclosed or suggested by the combination of the

Hobson and Mori references. As applicant believes the claims submitted herewith are now in condition for allowance, applicant's attorney respectfully requests timely issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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